



MEETING MINUTES

**Commissioners Present:** Irshad Khan, Maura Levitt, Pete Valavanis, Robert Taylor

**Commissioners Absent:** Sanhita Agnihotri, Richard Trumbo, Mohammed Junaid

**Others Present:** Cindy Plante & Hiba Zakai, RPBA;

Ald. Debra Silverstein & Keith Sokolowski, 50th ward

Fihan Nuhanan - area resident

**I. Call to order**

Meeting was called to order at 12:15 pm

**II. Public comment**

Robert shared flyers for tomorrow's Meet the Commander events on Devon with the new commander for the 24th district police. Hiba and Keith are also planning to attend.

**III. Approval of meeting minutes from September 2024**

Pete moved approval, Sanhita seconded.

APPROVED 4-0

**IV. YTD financials update**

Cindy gave an update on YTD spending and balance sheet, which was provided to commissioners via email earlier this week. SSA43 has received 96% of our approved levy so far this year and are on track or under budget on all budget categories except dumpsters, which we're in the process of renegotiating for next year.

**V. SSA tree trimming**

RPBA, West Ridge Chamber, and the 50th ward have all been getting complaints from businesses on Devon about tree trimming - the City no longer allows people to submit 311 requests for tree trimming, and ward offices can't request it either. We've received 2 quotes for the SSA to take this on - one from Davey tree service for \$10,250 and another from A1 tree service for \$18,800. Cindy also reached out to our current landscaping company Patch to request a quote, but they don't do tree trimming due to the additional permitting requirements.

Pete moved to approve the \$10,250 contract, Maura 2nded.

Approved 4-0

Robert asked about sidewalk repair for a trip hazard around the corner from the bank. Keith said this can be submitted to 311, but if it's more than one sidewalk square, the City would probably recommend pursuing the city's shared cost sidewalk repair program. Hiba will pass this along to her contact at Khan BBQ, as they had also asked about uneven sidewalks, and a sinkhole in the alley.

**VI. Rebate and sponsorship requests**

Hiba has been talking with several businesses about criminal damage repair rebate and BIP applications, including Ramen Chai (which has since closed), Shinwari Grill, Spinzer



and Nepal House - none have submitted anything yet.

**VII. 2025 BIP Rebate amounts - increase to \$8,000**

Cindy included this item on the agenda based on feedback from businesses as well as SSA commissioners that the current \$5,000 cap on BIP rebates has been seen by some as a deterrent to applying since costs have gone up for most projects.

Pete moved approval. Irshad seconded.  
Approved 4-0.

**VIII. 2025 rebate workshops**

Irshad said some of these folks may need someone to help filling out the paperwork, possibly doing it for them.

Cindy added that we had been planning a lunch and learn event for businesses on these rebates this week but canceled it due to lack of RSVP's. We'll probably revisit this in early 2025. The one workshop we did schedule and promote this year only had one attendee.

Irshad recommended afternoons for future events, and recommended trying to get sign contractors to attend to do estimates for people. Lots of people travel overseas in January so February might be better.

**IX. Chicago Sculpture exhibition**

Cindy shared additional background information with commissioners earlier this week via email. Chicago Sculpture Exhibit is a nonprofit that puts on an annual outdoor sculpture exhibition throughout the city. Sponsors are usually private building owners or SSA districts, each paying \$4000 to sponsor a sculpture. This cost includes all permitting and insurance.

Ald. Silverstein added that the 50th ward is planning to sponsor two, most likely in areas of the 50th ward outside the SSA.

Irshad asked about locations. Pete asked if the corner of Western and Devon would be possible.

Cindy suggested corners that have wider sidewalks or streetscape seating, like Devon and Artesian. The sidewalks are narrow at Western, which was why we didn't do TukTuk statues there.

Ald. Silverstein said that sponsors suggest preferred locations, but the organization has to check to make sure it will work. She suggested coming up with a list of priority corners.

Suggestions included Artesian as well as California, Sacramento, Talman, and Oakley. Rockwell, and Mozart. Commissioners agreed that Artesian and Mozart were the top two priority sites.

Pete moved to approve sponsorship for 2 sculptures at \$4,000 each. Maura seconded.  
Approved 4-0.



**IX. Camera Trailer**

Cindy shared two quotes with commissioners via email for purchase of a camera trailer similar to the one that CPD placed on Devon for a few weeks earlier this year. In addition to the \$28-30000 purchase cost for the equipment, there's an additional \$150/mo cost for mobile data service, software and cloud storage. We've been looking into this because commissioners on this SSA and others have expressed an interest in these. Many private businesses install these in parking lots, including the 7-eleven on Western, and the Lowes and Walmart on Touhy.

Ald. Silverstein asked if these are able to read license plates.

Cindy says these don't but it's something we can ask for updated pricing on. The pod cameras the SSA funded on Devon a few years ago didn't have license plate reading either.

Irshad would like more information about permitting requirements and whether there's data to support whether these cameras are an effective deterrent.

Cindy and colleagues are planning to meet with the 24th district about these in December.

No vote was taken.

**X. 2025 meeting calendar**

Cindy asked commissioners for a vote on the 2025 meeting calendar and is proposing meeting at noon on the 2nd Wednesday of odd-numbered months (January, March, May, July, September, and November).

Irshad would like to add additional meetings during the spring and summer. Cindy is concerned about adding meetings when this group already has difficulty getting quorum to meet consistently. Irshad asked to add April and June to the calendar in order to potentially approve more projects ahead of the mandatory July budget meeting, and indicated that he's been in contact with additional folks that might be interested in applying to join the commission.

Robert moved to approve the proposed dates plus April and June. Pete seconded. Approved 4-0.

**Adjournment**

Meeting adjourned at 1:15pm

Next Meeting: All SSA annual meeting & breakfast, Thursday, December 12